

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 PANAMA 02820 251744Z  
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-20  
IO-14 SAB-02 ACDA-12 HA-05 /112 W  
-----050756 251754Z /42

P R 251725Z APR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6709  
INFO PANCANAL  
USCINCSO

UNCLAS PANAMA 2820

DEPT FOR ARA/PAF AND PAN; USCINCSO FOR J-2 AND PAO; PANCANAL FOR IO

EO 11652: N/A  
TAGS: SOPN, PN  
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTIONS

FOLG SENT ACTION PRIORITY USINFO WASHDC PRIORITY INFO SECSTATE  
P R 251636Z APR 78 FROM USIS/PANAMA RPTD YOUR ACTION/INFO

QUOTE  
UNCLAS

EO 11652: N/A

MEDIA REACTION

1. PANAMA CITY.--RADIO/TV NEWSCASTS MENTIONED RETURN OF SEVERAL  
POLITICAL EXILES APRIL 24, BUT NO SIGNIFICANT COMMENTARIES.  
APRIL 25 MATUTINO AND CRITICA FRONT-PAGE PHOTOS OF RETURNING  
EXILES, BUT WITH NETIHER NEWS STORIES NOR COMMENTARIES.

2. CHANNEL 2 NEWS DIRECTOR MARIO VELASQUEZ IN COMMENTARY APRIL 24  
CALLED FOR INCREASED INTEREST AND ATTENTION TO PANAMA'S INTERNAL  
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PROBLEMS, NOW THAT TREATIES HAVE BEEN RATIFIED.

3. A PANEL OF FOUR TREATY NEGOTIATORS APPEARED ON CHANNEL 4'S  
"SPECIAL EDITION" PROGRAM HOSTED BY MAYIN CORRERA TO DISCUSS THE  
SENATE MODIFICATIONS OF THE PANAMA CANAL TREATY AND THE FUTURE  
OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN PANAMA. THE PANEL DEVOTED TWO HOURS TO  
THE TREATY AND ONE HOUR TO THE POLITICAL SYSTEM. PARTICIPANTS

WERE DIOGENES DE LA ROSA, CARLOS LOPEZ GUEVARA, EDWIN FABREGA  
AND ADOLFO AHUMADA.

4. THERE WERE FEW SURPRISES IN THE PANEL'S DEFENSE OF THE VARIOUS  
SENATE CHANGES INCLUDING THE DECONCINI RESERVATION. DE LA ROSA  
SET THE STAGE BY DEFINING THE TERMS AFTER WHICH LOPEZ GUEVARA  
ATTEMPTED TO PUT A GOOD FACE ON THE MODIFICATIONS WHILE EVADING  
THE HARDEST QUESTIONS PUT BY CORREA. WHEN CORREA CITED THE  
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AS AN EXAMPLE OF U.S. INTERVENTION WITHOUT  
LEGAL COVERING, LOPEZ G. REPLIED, "I'M EXPLAINING THE MEANING  
OF THE TREATIES IN THE WORLD OF LAW--I HAVE NO CONTROL OVER THE  
EVENTS WHICH MIGHT OCCUR." THROUGHOUT LOPEZ G. STRESSED THE  
"INTERNATIONAL NORMS" SUCH AS THE U.N. AND OAS CHARTERS WHICH  
TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER BILATERAL AGREEMENTS OR UNILATERAL ACTIONS.

5. THE LOQUACIOUS MINISTER OF LABOR, ADOLFO AHUMADA, HELD THE FLOOR  
FOR THE ENTIRE FINAL HOUR ON THE SUBJECT OF POLITICAL PARTIES.  
IN RESPONSE TO CORREA'S FIRST QUESTION ON THE MEANING OF  
TORRIJOS' APRIL 18 REFERENCE TO THE RESUMPTION OF PARTY  
ACTIVITY, AHUMADA ANSWERED THAT THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT  
NEVER INTENDED THE PARTIES TO DISAPPEAR, THAT THEY WILL BE  
ALLOWED TO RETURN, BUT THAT "THE PARTIES SHOULD NOT AND CANNOT  
GO AGAINST (CHOCAR) THE SYSTEM." THE AUGUST 6 ELECTIONS WILL NOT  
BE CANCELLED NOR WILL THE PARTIES BE ALLOWED TO ORGANIZE BEFORE  
THEN IN ORDER TO TAKE PART IN THEM. IT IS THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY  
WHICH WILL RESTRUCTURE THE PARTY SYSTEM, AND THERE WILL NOT BE  
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ENOUGH TIME BETWEEN AUGUST 6 AND OCTOBER 11 FOR THE RESTRUCTURING,  
THEREFORE THE PARTIES WILL NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE CHOICE OF THE  
NEW PRESIDENT.

6. AHUMADA ALSO MADE REFERENCE TO THE RETURNING EXILES, GIVING  
THE IMPRESSION THAT THERE WOULD BE NO REPRISALS, THAT THE  
GOVERNMENT WOULD ALLOW THOSE RETURNING TO START WITH A  
"CLEAN SLATE," (BORRON Y CUENTA NUEVA). ITEM  
UNQUOTE

JORDEN

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NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PRESS COMMENTS, PRESS SUMMARIES  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Comment:**  
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**Subject:** MEDIA REACTIONS FOLG SENT ACTION PRIORITY USINFO WASHDC PRIORITY INFO SECSTATE P R 251636Z APR 78 FROM USIS/PANAMA RPTD YOUR ACTI  
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**To:** STATE  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
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